

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 4698

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, RP
SUBJECT: ROMULO ON BASE NEGOTIATIONS

REF: MANILA 4589

1. SUMMARY: FROM INFORMAL CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY ROMULO IT IS CLEAR THAT TWO ASPECTS OF OUR BASE PROPOSALS ARE PARTICULARLY UNACCEPTABLE TO HIM: REQUIREMENT FOR ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS AND CONTINUED CONTROL BY AMERICANS OF FACILITIES OPEN TO FILIPINOS. END SUMMARY.

2. WHILE WE WERE WAITING FOR DECORATION OF ITALIAN AMBASSADOR AT MALACANANG MARCH 22, I HAD INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY ROMULO CONCERNING PHILIPPINE RESPONSE TO OUR BASE PROPOSALS.

3. I MENTIONED OUR DISAPPOINTMENT THAT, AFTER SUCH
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EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS AND SPECIAL EFFORTS IN WASHINGTON,
WE SEEM STILL TO BE FAR APART.

4. ROMULO REPLIED THAT HE FULLY APPRECIATED THE
SPECIAL EFFORTS BEING MADE AND THE TONE OF THE DISCUSSIONS.
HOWEVER, HE SAID, HE AND THE PRESIDENT WERE POLITICAL
FIGURES AND THEY HAD TO BE ALWAYS CONSCIOUS OF HOW THINGS

LOOKED IN A PHILIPPINE POLITICAL CONTEXT. IN THIS CONTEXT, IT WAS PARTICULARLY GALLING FOR FILIPINOS TO HAVE TO GO HAT IN HAND EACH YEAR TO THE AMERICAN CONGRESS TO GET COMPENSATION WHICH THEY BELIEVED THEY WERE ENTITLED TO BY VIRTUE OF FACILITIES GRANTED TO THE AMERICANS.

5. I REPLIED THAT IT WAS NOT REQUIRED THAT THE FILIPINOS APPROACH OUR CONGRESS. THAT WAS OUR BUSINESS. IF THE SECRETARY IN A LETTER ASSURED THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT THAT HE WOULD SEEK APPROPRIATIONS EACH YEAR, WE WOULD TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR DOING SO.

5. ROMULO REPLIED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THIS BUT THAT NEVERTHELESS, IT MEANT THAT THE PHILIPPINE RELATIONSHIP, INCLUDING HUMAN RIGHTS, WAS EXAMINED PUBLICLY EACH YEAR BEFORE THE AMERICAN CONGRESS. FURTHERMORE, THE AMERICAN CONGRESS CHANGED EVERY TWO YEARS AND "HOW COULD ONE COUNT ON ANY STABILITY."

7. AFTER I POINTED OUT THAT CONGRESS WAS MORE STABLE THAN THAT, ROMULO SAID THAT THE PHILIPPINES STILL STRONGLY HOPE FOR A MULTIYEAR AGREEMENT. I SAID THAT THIS WAS JUST NOT POSSIBLE GIVEN THE ATTITUDES IN THE CONGRESS. THE TURKISH AGREEMENT WAS NOT YET APPROVED AND THE SPANISH AGREEMENT HAD BEEN AMENDED TO REQUIRE ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS. ROMULO THEN SAID THAT SENATOR PALEAZ (A MEMBER

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OF THE PHILIPPINE NEGOTIATION PANEL) FEELS THAT THE PHILIPPINES SHOULD NOT ACCEPT AN AGREEMENT CALLING FOR ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS BUT SHOULD LET THE BASES REMAIN WITHOUT COMPENSATION "ON SUFFERANCE."

8. ON THE QUESTION OF JOHN HAY, I SAID I HOPED THE PHILIPPINE SIDE REALIZED THE EXTENSIVE USE NOW BEING MADE OF THAT FACILITY BY FILIPINOS. ROMULO SAID THAT THIS WAS IRRELEVANT AS LONG AS THE FILIPINOS ON THEIR OWN TERRITORY HAD TO ASK FOR PASSES FROM FOREIGN AUTHORITIES.

9. COMMENT: MY CONVERSATION WITH ROMULO SUGGESTS THAT PART OF THE PHILIPPINE POSTURE MAY BE FOR THE RECORD BUT IT ALSO FURTHER CONFIRMS THE GENUINE SENSITIVITY OVER THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS. ONE POSSIBILITY WE MIGHT WISH TO EXPLORE TO MEET THIS WOULD BE TO SEEK A GREATER PORTION OF OUR TOTAL PACKAGE IN THE FIRST YEAR, INCLUDING POSSIBLY ALL GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

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